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The DrumBeat

Tyler Junior College's independent student media since 1927

October 8 - October 21, 2021

Vol. 90 - Issue 4

Student Senate to revisit Turning Point USA vote

By Marie Salazar
Editor-in-Chief

After discovering improper parliamentary procedure in the vote that lead to the denial of Turning Point USA's recognition as an on-campus organization, Tyler Junior College's Student Senate plans to correct the issue in the Student Senate meeting on Oct. 12.

Motions that will be presented to students include, Vote No. 1: Rescind the motion for recognition of TPUSA. If Vote No.1 passes, the Senate will move to Vote No. 2, which is the vote to recognize TPUSA as an official on-campus organization.

If Vote No.1 is not passed the decision made on Sept. 28 will remain and TPUSA members may appeal the original vote as outlined in the student handbook.

TJC's board room within the White Administration Services Center is where Student Senate meetings are held.

Photo by Marie Salazar

Lauren Tyler, director of student life, discusses the reason for rescinding the motion.

"After looking at the recording, we found there were some errors in parliamentary procedure," Tyler said. "So we felt as though rescinding it to vote in a different form would be the fairest process for everyone."

Organization members who were present at the Sept. 28 meeting voted vocally in favor or opposition of the recognition of TPUSA. There were 2 votes for, 6 votes against and 12 abstentions according to the Student Senate minutes.

However, organizations present at the upcoming meeting on Oct. 12 will partake in the process of a secret ballot. The head representative of each organization will vote on behalf of said organization.

"So we voted by voice vote the first time and there was division, so we did it by roll call but a couple of things were presented," Tyler said. "One, students that were voting that day might not have been aware of everything because they might not have been there the week before. And then again they had to state their vote out loud and so voting with a secret ballot would allow them to vote without fear of intimidation or retaliation or anything like that."

> ***"We are really just about freedom, limited government, free-market, free speech, just all things supporting the constitution,"***
>
> *- Juliana Penney, intended TPUSA chapter President*

Students for and opposed may prepare a maximum of a three-minute speech to present to the senate before the vote is cast. The meeting will be held at 4 p.m. on Oct. 12 in the White Administrative Services Center Board Room.

In the senate meeting on Sept. 28, the motion to acknowledge TPUSA was denied over concerns about some of the group's platforms. TPUSA was introduced to the Student Senate on Sept. 21 where the organization's intended chapter president, Freshman Juliana Penny, gave a brief overview of what the organization stands for.

> ***"I definitely believe that this would bring more political polarization on campus, which is the opposite of what we should be going for."***
>
> *- Joseph Ritter, representative of Phi Rho Pi Speech and Debate*

Penney, what TPUSA represents.

"We are really just about freedom, limited government, free-market, free speech, just all things supporting the constitution," Penney said. She added, "over 80 students have already expressed interest in joining our chapter."

According to tpusa.com, "TPUSA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to identify, educate, train, and organize students to promote freedom." The website also states the organization is present on 2,500 campuses across America, which includes high schools,

TPUSA continued on page 4

HOCO events returning to campus

By Colton Hollis
Multimedia Journalist

After being canceled last year due to the pandemic, Homecoming festivities are returning to the Tyler Junior College campus. This will be some students' only chance to participate in Homecoming.

Homecoming starts Oct. 18 with the Drumbeat opening ceremony, which is a tradition dating back to 1948. The event consists of students signing up to bang on the Apache drum. The story goes that if the drum cadences are kept up for every day of Homecoming leading up to the game, the team is going to win. However, if the beating ever stops then the team is going to lose the football game Saturday. Lauren Tyler, director of Student Life at TJC, explained why the Drumbeat is significant for students and alumni.

"I think that it is because it involves everyone to accomplish that goal. From employees, to staff, students, alumni, everyone comes together for one purpose," Tyler said.

Graphic courtesy of TJC Marketing Dept.

For student organizations, there's the opportunity to show school spirit through decorating offices, making a spirit flag and signing up to have a float in the parade. The theme for this year's Homecoming is "From Virtual to Reality." Organization members can gain points for participating in Homecoming events that help their organizations rise in tiers. The higher tier an organization is, the more privileges they earn.

Homecoming continued on page 3

TJC adjusts COVID-19 reporting for fall 2021 semester

Number of confirmed cases for one week this fall equals total number of cases in spring 2021

By Chris Swann
Design and Photo Editor

Tyler Junior College has changed the way COVID cases are being reported this fall.

In the fall 2021 semester, TJC made numerous policy changes in response to an executive order issued by Gov. Greg Abbott on May 18 and Aug. 25 outlawing mask and vaccination mandates, respectively. In response, TJC removed the mask mandate and increased the size of students in instructional spaces. Contact tracing, which was previously done to mitigate community spread in the classrooms, is also not being implemented this semester.

For the sixth week of classes this fall (Sept. 26-Oct. 2), a total of 47 students and staff members were reported to have tested positive for COVID, according to data on TJC's Coronavirus Information Page.

To compare, the total number of positive cases reported through the duration of the spring 2021 semester also reached 47 students and staff, according to 28 Clery reports released by Campus Police. These reports were from Jan. 5 to April 21, which is when the last report was released. No reports were listed in May.

The reports from previous semesters were released in compliance with the federal Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security policy. According to The Clery Center, this act, "requires colleges and universities to report campus crime data, support victims of violence, and publicly outline the policies and procedures they have to put into place to improve campus safety." Serious illnesses can be an immediate threat to the health or safety of campus communities, which includes COVID-19.

Rebecca Sanders, director of public relations and media affairs said, "When the pandemic began, the Department of Education provided guidance to colleges and universities on meeting the Clery Act's notification requirements related to COVID-19,"

She said the way these reports are conveyed is up to interpretation, as long as it is "multi-modal," or uses a variety of modes to express information to be accessible to all members of a community.

In 2020, TJC opted for a single banner on the top of the website's homepage, directing visitors to information regarding COVID-19, what precautions the campus is taking, and directing to other sources such as different health care providers, state and local health authorities, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Clery reports were also released when new cases were found from within campus.

Date	Case Counts '21	Case Counts '20
8/30 - 9/3	58	6
9/5 - 9/11	51	13
9/12 - 9/18	76	13
9/19 - 9/25	66	17
9/26 - 10/2	47	10

Cases for the following five weeks in 2021 were more than triple the amount in 2020. *Statistics for Oct. 4 2020 were unavailable at the time of press.

Graphic by Chris Swann

"The daily Clery notifications regarding positive cases are not currently posted on the TJC website," Sanders said. "As we resumed normal operations on June 1, 2021, we stopped reporting daily positive cases and kept the banner at the top of the page."

Now the banner directs to a dedicated COVID-19 information center page. Here, students are lead to other sources for information and are provided with instructions to those who are sick or have been in close contact with someone who tested positive.

Weekly statistics with the number of active staff and faculty cases, along with total numbers of each have been added to provide a visual and easier method of keeping track of cases across campus. Underneath, a new link to an application for financial assistance to struggling students via the TJC NOW Fund and the CARES Act is also included.

As of Oct. 1, 47% of people over the age of 12 are fully vaccinated and 55% have received one dose of the COVID vaccines in Smith County. Statewide, 61% of individuals who are 12 years old or older are fully vaccinated, according to NET Health.

Roses & Royalty; 88th annual Rose Festival returns to Tyler

By Asia Johnson
Managing Editor

After last year's cancellation, Tyler will celebrate the 88th annual Rose Festival Oct. 14-17. The 7th Annual Roses in the Park will be Oct. 9 at the Bergfeld Amphitheater.

The Rose Festival is an important stamp in Tyler's history, bringing together the community and many tourists to celebrate this tradition.

Visit Tyler's President Shari Lee said, "It really is the pinnacle event that the city puts together and has for so many years."

Every year the Rose Festival accumulates many tourists, which accounts for a large economic impact to the city.

"We could go anywhere from 20-30, possibly even 40,000 people on average who attend the Rose Festival. We anticipate there is a $2(million)-3 million economic impact that the festival brings to the city," Lee said.

So what makes roses in Tyler so special? The answer is found in the ground.

"It dates back to the very beginning," Lee said. "There was an industry that produced some of the nation's largest amounts of peaches. Unfortunately, there was a peach blight that wiped out all of the peach trees. The farmers were trying to look for the crop they could grow and they found the soil in Tyler is perfect for roses."

The significance of the festival doesn't only lie in the roses, but also in other aspects such as the royal court's attire.

"The Queen's dress is elaborate and beautiful and it takes over a year and a half to make. All the ladies-in-waiting and the Duchess' dresses are made in their own special way for that particular girl," Lee said.

The Rose Festival Board of Directors chooses the royal court, and the festival president makes the final decision.

They consider the ladies' volunteer work, previous involvement in the festival, and familial connection when making their decisions.

Photo by Maalesha Jordan
The Queen's Tea invites both members of the court as well as the general public to participate in a coronation-attire event. The general public has an opportunity to meet and take pictures with the court among the 14 acres of roses in the Tyler Rose Garden.

This year's court will include: the queen, Anna Grace Hallmark, princess Elizabeth Reid Walker, and duchess Emily Ann Milton.

Some students have had the opportunity to be a part of this event by walking in the parade within particular organizations.

TJC freshman Sarai Gonzalez said, "I participated with the Brigadettes. My favorite part of the parade was seeing everyone from Tyler come together as well as seeing the faces of people light up as you walk by! It was a very memorable experience."

Due to COVID, safety guidelines will be set in place as a health precaution for visitors and participants.

"The Rose Garden Center is under COVID guidelines like social distancing and the opportunity to wear a mask, which is highly recommended," Lee said.

The founding of the Rose Festival happened decades ago when roses from Tyler caught non-localists' attention.

"There were people that traveled to New York's World Fair and they saw that roses were on display," Lee said. "They asked, 'Where are these roses from?' and they were told Tyler, Texas. This particular person was from Tyler and they were just thrilled. They said, 'That's my hometown. People may be interested in roses after all and maybe come to see our city.'"

88th Annual Rose Festival
Oct. 14-17

7th Annual Roses in the Park
Oct. 9
Bergfeld Amphitheater

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Kameron
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Applications are open
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Haitian migrants spark conversation about immigration

By Maalesha Jordan
Social Media Editor

Immigration has been at the forefront of policy development recently due to recent events involving Haitian migrants in Del Rio and the government takeover in Afghanistan.

For approximately a week in September, 15,000 Haitian migrants were seeking asylum and sheltered under a bridge in Del Rio, Texas. Haitian people are traveling to the U.S. seeking asylum from their current conditions in Haiti. Haiti is located in the Caribbean islands west of Jamaica and bordered on the east side by the Dominican Republic. This country is in an endless state of crisis, recovering from multiple earthquakes and tropical storm and infrastructure damage. The latest earthquake happened a few weeks after the assassination of the Haitian president Jovenel Moïse in July.

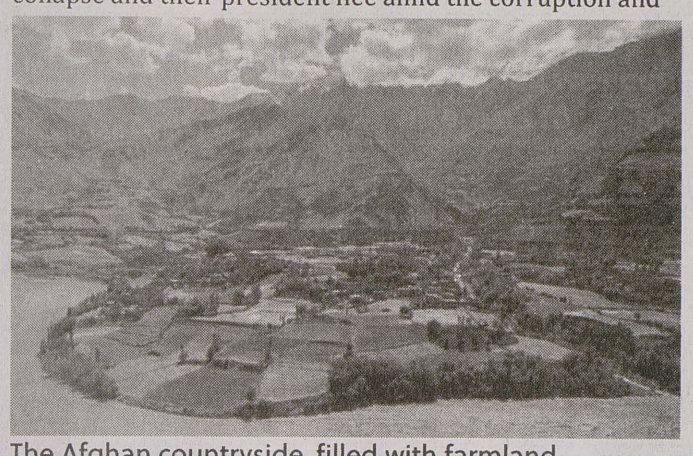
According to Tyler Junior College history professor Dr. Keith Eppich, "People come to the United States for two reasons. Number one is push [and] number two is pull."

These factors can be described as the reason people choose to make the journey to the U. S.

According to Eppich, the push factor is very poor conditions in the home country. These circumstances have created unbearable situation, political unrest, economic instability and social stagnation.

Social stagnation can be described as the lack of progress in regard to access to education and financial opportunities, according to Eppich. Stagnation in Haiti dates back to when they had to pay the French government for their freedom from slavery. This is a primary cause for the Haitian economy's lack of prosperity, according to the CIA World Factbook. The Haitian people were in Texas for approximately a week before being flown back to Haiti. As of Sept. 24, there were "no migrants remaining under the international bridge" according to the Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas in a press briefing. The Haitian people were sent back home under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Title 42 order, which limits undocumented peoples entrance into the U. S. to prevent further spread of COVID -19. Haiti has a complicated history that continues to impact its future as a country.

Afghanistan is a Middle Eastern country that has dealt with being war-torn for many years causing people to migrate and flee the political unrest. President Joe Biden gave remarks on Aug. 31 in the White House state dining room saying, "the United States ended 20 years of war in Afghanistan — the longest war in American history." The end of the war was announced in August 2021. Not long after the war ended the government was taken over by the Taliban. Biden stated, people are leaving their country of Afghanistan due to watching "their own government collapse and their president flee amid the corruption and



The Afghan countryside, filled with farmland surrounded by mountains. Photo courtesy of EJ Wolfson via Unsplash

malfeasance, handing over the country to their enemy, the Taliban." These conditions are examples of the push factors that lead people to seek support and asylum from the U.S. Pull factors for the U.S. include support and economic opportunity that is provided.

Humanitarian assistance is being provided to the Haitian and Afghan people from the U. S. For example, the U.S. Agency for International Development announced in a weekly report that it "continues to support the most vulnerable in Afghanistan through an additional $64 million for food, health care, and more." This support is a response to the conditions that are being faced by the people in this foreign country. USAID is a organization that works to enhance "government's international development and humanitarian efforts," according to its website.

Support to the Haitian government from " U.S. agencies to work with the Haitian and other regional governments to provide assistance and support to returnees."

There are many different types of immigration reform to be considered. Immigration policy in the U.S. has had an impact on both the citizens of this country and the people who travel here to start a new life. These push and pull are a defining factor of immigration policy and reform.

> "People come to the United States for two reasons. Number one is push [and] number two is pull," said Dr. Keith Eppich, history professor

A scene from a populated street in Haiti.

Photo courtesy of Susan Mohr via Unsplash

Homecoming: King and Queen elections take place in Rogers Student Center and Jenkins Hall

From Page 1

Decorated spirit flags will be displayed on Oct. 18 in the Rogers Student Center, with judging of any decoration competitions being Oct. 19. All organizations will be reimbursed $100 for the office decorating, $50 for the float, and the Center for Student Life and Involvement will provide certain supplies for the spirit flags. The deadline to return receipts for reimbursements is Oct. 25.

Homecoming King and Queen elections will also begin Oct. 18 until Oct. 20. Voting times are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. All recognized organizations are able to elect a nominee for both King and Queen.

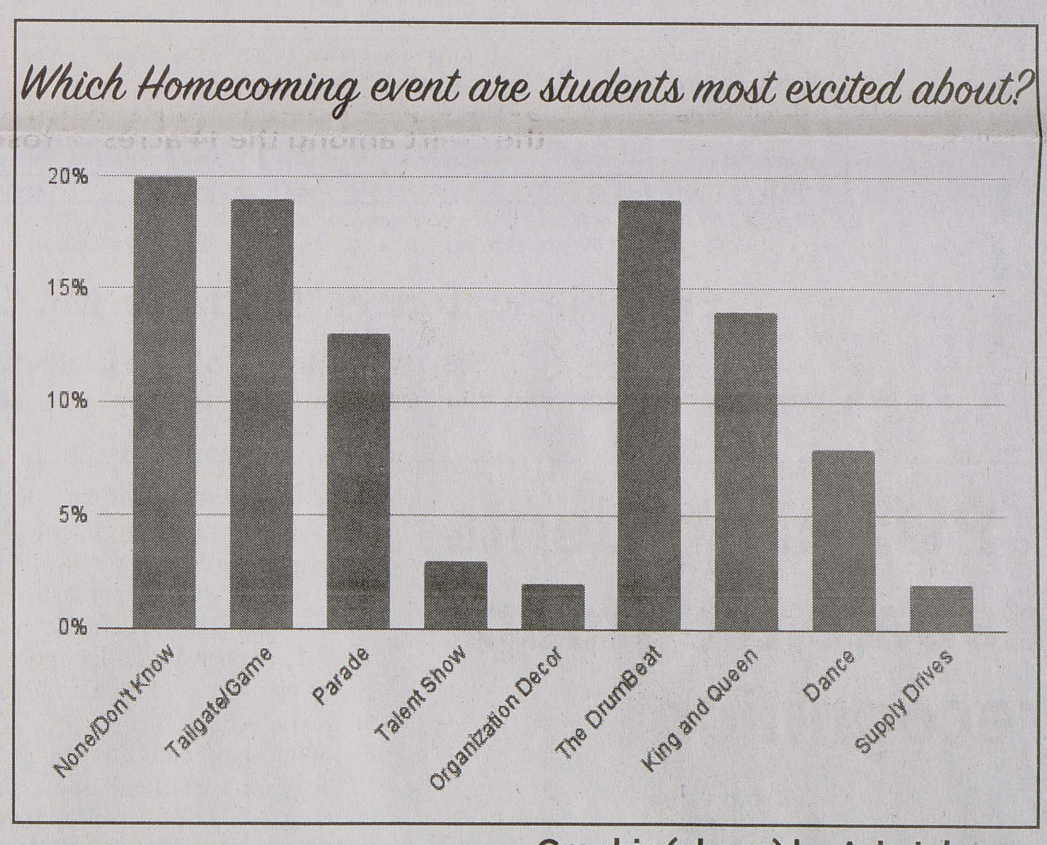
Another upcoming event is the campus supply drive that will also generate points for whatever organization a student may represent. Any student can bring non-perishable items to the CSLI on the second floor of the RSC if they want to give back to their community. Collection begins Oct. 18 and ends Oct. 20.

There will be a virtual reality exhibit set up outside the RSC on Oct.19, which also happens to be the date of The Campus Capers Talent Show.

The Homecoming dance is on Oct. 20 with a late-night breakfast event following at 11 p.m. in Apache Junction.

There is the Apache Nation parade on Oct. 21, where TJC students can come support all things TJC Apache. There will then be a block party and pep rally in front of the Pat Hartley Field. There will also be a campuswide scavenger hunt on Oct. 22 for Find it Friday.

This whole week of fun and festivities concludes Oct. 23 when the Apache volleyball team takes on the North Central Texas College Lions at noon, and the Apache football team takes on the Blinn College Buccaneers at 3 p.m. at Rose Stadium.



Graphic (above) by Asia Johnson
A poll was conducted for students displaying different event interests for Homecoming. HOCO week will take place Oct.18-23.

Upcoming Student Events

Oct. 9 - Oct. 23

OCT. 9
TJC Football vs NEO
11 a.m.
Rose Stadium

OCT. 12
Therapet
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Library

OCT. 12
Student Senate General Assembly
4 - 5 p.m.
WASC, Board Room

OCT. 14
Outdoor Movie ft. Coco
8 p.m.
RPAC Plaza

OCT. 18
Homecoming Opening Ceremony
11:30 a.m.
RSC

OCT. 19
Virtual Reality Experience
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Outside RSC

OCT. 19
Student Senate General Assembly
4 - 5 p.m.
WASC, Board Room

OCT. 19
Campus Capers
7 p.m.
RPAC

OCT. 20
Homecoming Dance & Late Night Breakfast
8 p.m. - 12 a.m.
RSC

OCT. 21
Parade, Pep Rally & Block Party
6 - 10 p.m.
Pat Hartley Field

OCT. 22
"Find It" Friday
All Day

OCT. 23
Football TJC vs Blinn (Homecoming)
3 p.m.
Rose Stadium

Navigating parliamentary procedure

By Marie Salazar
Editor-In-Chief

Imagine this, you're sitting in the student board room attending your college's student senate meeting. You want to address the chair, to move to a vote, but you decide not too because you're not sure how. Below is an explanation of the importance of parliamentary procedure and a cut-out cheat sheet to help you through your next Student Senate meeting.

The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to help groups work collectively to successfully achieve the intended goals of a meeting. For more information regarding parliamentary procedure visit, robertsrules.com.

Robert's Rule Cheat Sheet

Remember to always address the chair as "Madame/Mr. Chairman, or Chair."

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Object to procedure or personal affront	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"I call for a division of the house"	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	None unless someone objects
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to..."	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).

Example sentence: "Madame/Mr. Chairman or Chair, I move that _____."

Graphic courtesy of The Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies

TPUSA: Students debate on group recognition

From Page 1

private schools, colleges and universities. In Texas this includes, the University of Texas San Antonio, Texas State University and Trinity College.

"We plan to work with the office of student activities to make sure we are following all the necessary procedures to become recognized as an official student organization," Penney said. "We look forward to being a part of the broad tapestry of ideas and opinions that make our campus great."

Opponents of the motion argued the group is based on hate, citing a professor watchlist, a list created by TPUSA to expose what the organization alleges are "Radical Professors." Dictionary.com defines radical as, "a person who holds or follows strong convictions or extreme principles; extremist."

The professorwastchlist.org states, "The mission of Professor Watchlist is to expose and document college professors who discriminate against conservative students and advance leftist propaganda in the classroom." Examples of reasons why professors have been placed on the watchlist include, a professor's activism within a group outside of campus, a professor being a co-author of a book that discusses male dominance in the field of physics and a professor vocally opposing the hiring of conservative professors by the university.

Concerns about this organization have also surfaced nationwide. An article written by CBS Austin discusses how in 2019 TPUSA at Texas State University was, "under fire for allegations claiming it encourages members to taunt students and faculty who oppose their views." NBC News also covered how Facebook removed "hundreds of fake accounts created by a marketing company that worked with the young conservative group Turning Point USA to invade the comments sections of mainstream publishers and denigrate Democratic politicians."

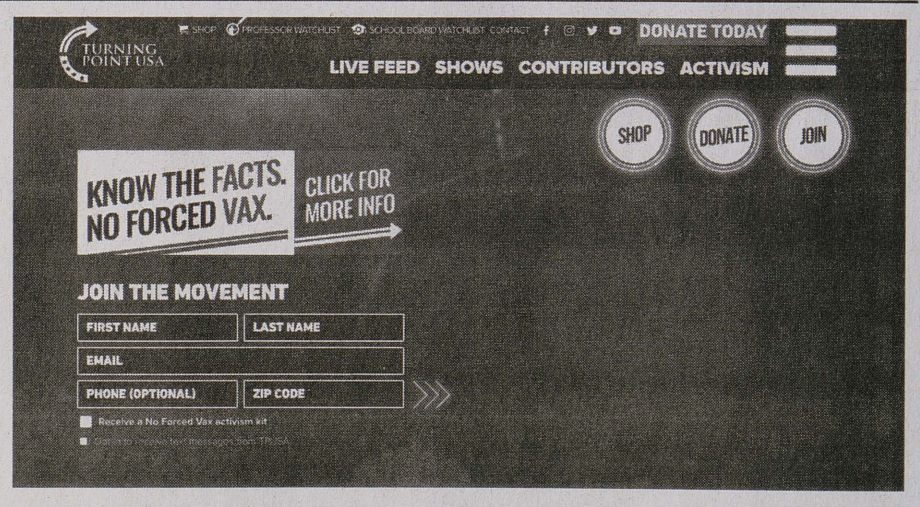


Image courtesy of tpusa.com

A screenshot of the TPUSA's homepage on Oct. 6 showing where individuals go to join the national organization.

Jessica Sailing, TJC sophomore and representative for the Phi Rho Pi Speech and Debate Team, opposed the recognition of TPUSA.

"Turning Point is a group that is founded on hatred, and it is a group that is founded on manipulation of young students," Sailing said. "It is an indoctrination program into the far right, and it is prone to becoming an echo chamber as well as associating our school with a specific political party, which is not something that we should be doing or that we need to."

Others in opposition believe the recognition of TPUSA on campus would cause political unbalance.

"I think this organization would be detrimental to the student body and the campus atmosphere," Sophomore Joseph Ritter, representative of Phi Rho Pi Speech and Debate Team, said. "I definitely believe that this would bring more political polarization on campus, which is the opposite of what we should be going for."

Dr. Amanda Jo Ratcliff, one of the faculty advisers for TPUSA, said her goal as the faculty adviser, "is to provide support and encouragement to those who wish to participate in the organization." She added TPUSA provides students an, "outlet to explore ideas related to freedom."

"Adding this organization to TJC campus life would fill a current gap and provide an opportunity for students to engage with other students interested in these topics," Ratcliff said.

Some opponents are concerned about the background of TPUSA rather than the existence or recognition of a conservative group on campus.

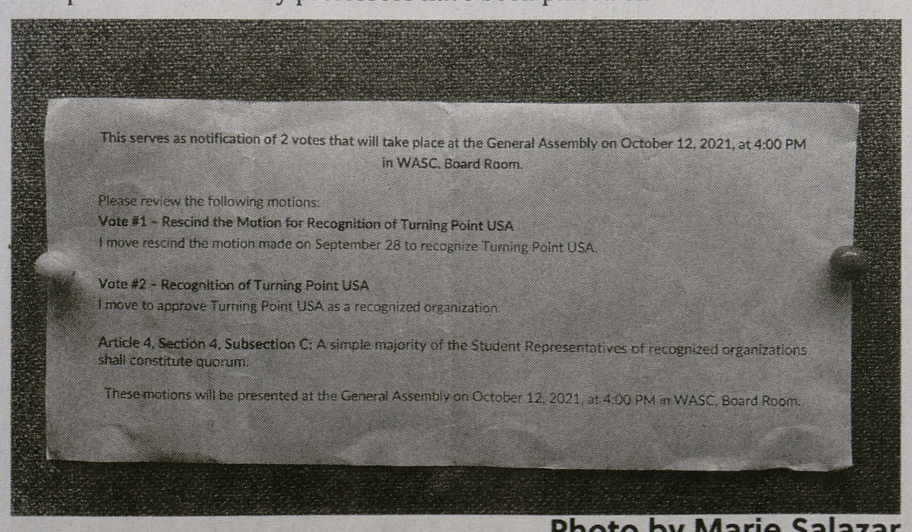
"I would be happy for those people to try and start something else. I know the ladies that tried to start Turning Point and I can say that they're very lovely people," Sailing said. "But their intentions don't necessarily matter when there are higher-up people in that organization who have negative intentions. So I would be open to them starting another kind of discussion group, but Turning Point specifically is just not acceptable."

Both parties for and against the organization discussed their reaction to the denial on Sept. 28.

"It was disappointing, but this turn of events now gives us an opportunity to encourage people to do their own research on Turning Point USA," Ratcliff said. "The national organization's website (tpusa.com) is a good place for people to start reading about what this organization actually promotes."

Students who voted in opposition to the group also shared their feelings about the group being denied.

"I am honestly surprised on how the vote went. I definitely thought the organization would be recognized, but I knew it was something worth fighting against," Ritter said.


This serves as notification of 2 votes that will take place at the General Assembly on October 12, 2021, at 4:00 PM in WASC, Board Room.

Please review the following motions:

Vote #1 - Rescind the Motion for Recognition of Turning Point USA
I move rescind the motion made on September 28 to recognize Turning Point USA.

Vote #2 - Recognition of Turning Point USA
I move to approve Turning Point USA as a recognized organization.

Article 4, Section 4, Subsection C: A simple majority of the Student Representatives of recognized organizations shall constitute quorum.

These motions will be presented at the General Assembly on October 12, 2021, at 4:00 PM in WASC, Board Room.

Photo by Marie Salazar

This notification slip was distributed to students during the Oct. 12 committee meeting hosted by Student Senate.

Finding positive methods to better mental health

Column and Graphic by Brooklyn Gundling
Copy Editor

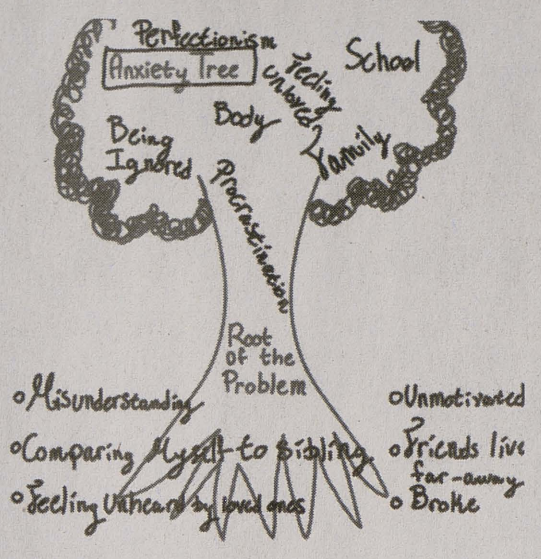
Summer has officially ended, and fall is here. With the arrival of fall comes higher rates of depression and anxiety, according to the National Institute of Mental health. It is strongly recommended that you go to therapy if seriously depressed or considering suicide. But when one is struggling, it can be hard to simply shower, much less make an appointment. If you are looking to make some progress in your own mental health but don't know where to start, here are a few first steps you can make to take your mental health back into your own hands.

Don't isolate yourself

The first instinct for many young adults who are struggling is to isolate themselves from other people. It feels easier to separate yourself from those around you rather than engaging with others when you are feeling depressed or anxious. While being alone can feel like a solution, it can actually make one's struggles worse.

"Isolation is often a silent killer especially in this COVID era," said Licensed Counselor Christian Sarran of Sarran Counseling PLLC in Tyler. "It's just really important that even though we feel like we can handle it on our own that we need to step out of our comfort zone of the moment and reach out to people so that they can give us that social peace that we need for the struggles that we're in right now."

A support network is a group of people one trusts to be there when help is needed. They comfort during the lows and celebrate the highs of our lives. According to an article posted on mentalhealth.gov, a good support network "lets you freely express your feelings and emotions without judging, teasing, or criticizing."



Focus on your physical health

"Exercise has been shown to improve the moods of people with clinical mental health problems, as well as those who only show mildly depressed symptoms," according to Simplypsychology.org.

You can relieve some anxiety simply by going outside for a short walk or jog to release endorphins and increase serotonin levels in the brain. "You know 5-10 minutes just walking, jogging or even stretching," Sarran said, "can really help enhance the endorphins in our brain that we need to feel good and reduce anxiety levels that we may be dealing with."

But some days getting out of bed feels impossible. When struggling to physically go outside, you can crack open a window or open the blinds in your room to help balance out the chemicals in your brain. "We know that the sun provides vitamin D and helps with our mood stabilization," Sarran said. "In the summer, we feel better but when the fall and winter comes we lose that sunlight."

Feeling good physically allows your brain to focus on itself and what it needs to be healthy again, instead of working overtime to take care of the physical body. Feeling good physically allows our brain to focus on what is making it unhappy in order to better fix it.

Stay away from drugs

While getting high or using mood-enhancing drugs has become a popular method for easing anxiety, it can actually make your anxiety worse. Sarran said, "Honestly, it will just create more anxiety. It tells the brain you need to work harder."

Using drugs in this way may seem like it works in the short term, but the effect it has on your brain can be detrimental. "It over-stimulates the pleasure principle of the brain and makes your brain actually have to work harder, which can actually increase anxiety," Sarran said.

Journaling

Writing down your thoughts and feelings is a great way of sorting them out. When thinking of a million miles a minute, it helps to slow down for a second and try to figure out what exactly you are feeling at the moment. Journaling is an exercise often given to therapy patients but can be utilized by everyone.

"Writing or drawing can be therapeutic in itself," Sarran said."Writing down feelings or thoughts can create a picture or map of what you're dealing with and help you be able to move forward."

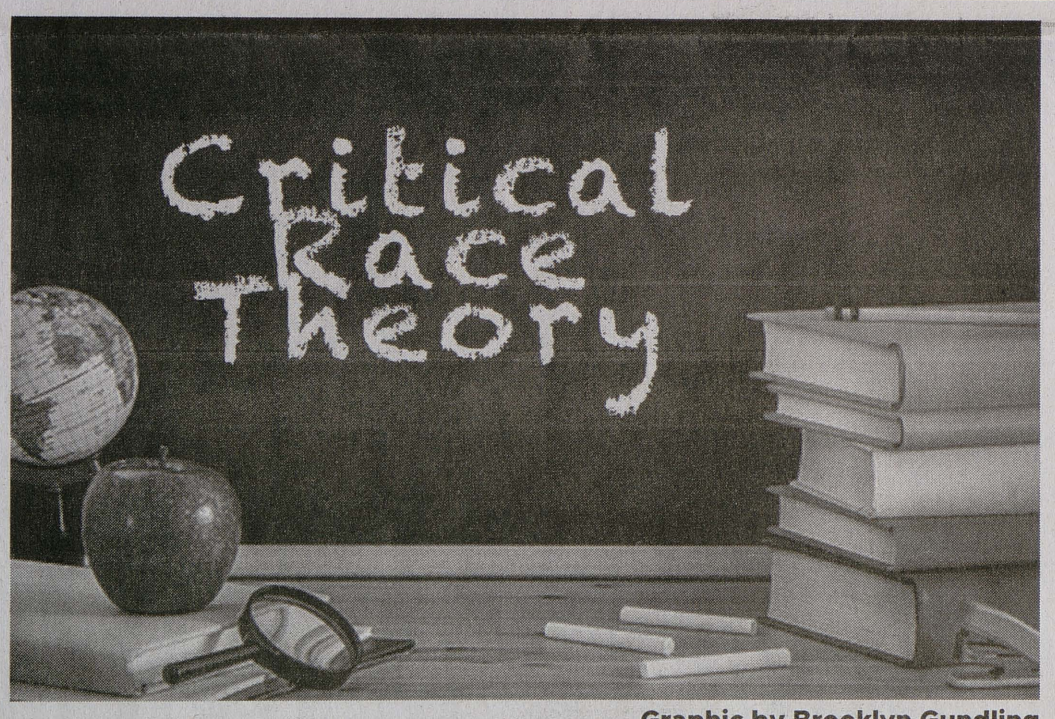
Writing down things you are grateful for each day, the people you love, or the new experiences you had that day will help remind you to live each day to the fullest even when it feels impossible.

You can set goals in your journals, as well. "Something small can help create a sense of accomplishment for feeling better about yourself. 'OK, I've done something productive' and that can really help advance someone's mood or mental state of being at the time," Sarran said.

Little tasks like making your bed or cleaning your clothes off the floor can feel impossible in the midst of depression. But by making a goal to do something small every day, you can slowly clean up your space and feel productive at the same time.

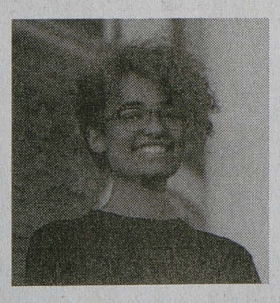
While none of the activities are substitutes for actual professional help, it can be empowering to take your mental health back into your own hands again. If seriously depressed or considering suicide, seek professional help. But if you can do nothing else, find your support group and remember to lean on them when you need to. Take care of your physical health as best you can just by opening a window to let the outside world in a bit, and when things feel too big to deal with, write them down.

You are wanted and you are enough.



Graphic by Brooklyn Gundling

Taking away the discussion of race and its harms



Column by Nicki Tijerina
Contributing Writer

Critical race theory rejects the "colorblind" philosophy and acknowledges the racial disparities that have persisted despite years of civil rights reformations. The decision to remove this from the curriculum greatly impacts students and teachers because it hinders a very important discussion children need to be having: What is race.

Ignoring the subject of race will cause more problems in the future than ignoring it would because critical race theory examines the inner workings of much bigger structures rather than looking at just blatant racism. Teaching kids the history of racism and its perseverance in our country allows them to look at their own subconscious from their own thoughts on how our country is run, and inspires students to enact change and progression to create a better future.

Racism isn't always obvious and blatant; it can be subtle and inconspicuous. That discrete kind of racism can be much more harmful to people of color. Like voter laws that make it harder for POC families in low income communities, or how medical disparities are more common among POC. The discussion of race is extremely important today when it seems that our country is divided, and starting these discussions early and among peers in a safe setting can help dismantle covert racism.

The teaching of racial curriculum doesn't just affect the students, but teachers, as well. How are our future teachers supposed to tackle these essential issues? A part of teaching is preparing students for life outside of the school's walls. Giving our teachers the knowledge on how to address and discuss these heavy topics with their students will not only help to inspire change within the students but also in the teachers themselves. Together they can learn how to make their classrooms a safer space for all kinds of students. Topics such as the KKK and how racism still plays a large part in our society today are difficult to discuss, let alone teach, but the only way to begin teaching students this material is to prepare future teachers, as well.

When we open ourselves to discussing the history of race and people of color, we open ourselves to better understanding the issues that plague our country. The more we know about the other sides of history the better we can make the future.

Challenging the cliche: the customer is always right

Column by Asia Johnson
Managing Editor

In many businesses that deal with the public, how their employees interact with the customer is a major aspect of their job performance.

Because of the ongoing pandemic, society has looked to businesses now more than ever whether that be a grocery store like Walmart and Target who were forced to set product limitations, or fast-food restaurants like Domino's or Marco's that had many call-in deliveries during the mass quarantine period.

With larger quantities of customers utilizing these businesses, we have to question if the well-known phrase of "the customer is always right" holds any truth.

Customers are to be made top priority for any workplace. It is an employee's job to meet the needs of their customers as best as possible, but what if the customer is not abiding by policies or direction set in place?

"Being a business owner, you have to consider both sides," said owner of Adorn Me Beauty and Essence, Treasure Massenburge. "I would consider the request that the customer is proposing. If the request is unreasonable, I would politely tell them I won't be able to perform the request that they're asking. Even if the customer doesn't agree with your decision and begins to slander your business, you have to remain level-headed."

I have personally experienced a situation at work when a customer came through the drive-thru, complaining their food was cold and they were missing an item. When asked for a receipt, they said they had lost it. My coworkers and I knew for a fact all of their food was cooked-to-order and all of the items were there. It is our company's policy to deny any replacement of food without a receipt, no matter the customer. Despite our well-known policy, my manager made the decision to replace all of the food, apologize, and allowed them to keep their old order.

I asked my manager why he decided to go against policy and he said it was because "the customer was respectful" and he wanted to "avoid confrontation and bad reviews."

Corporate protocol was abandoned due to the managerial interpretation of the situation with the goal of steering clear from an irate consumer for the pristine appearance of the business.

While some workers may agree with my manager and say that it's OK to bend rules to satisfy clientele, others believe you should stand your ground on company guidelines.

Dollar General employee Abby Reynolds said, "Do not just do something because the customer says you should. Explain to the customer how you have to follow the rules or it may cost you your job."

Some employees may feel pressured when trying to balance buyer satisfaction while abiding by the rules. This is on account of how the customer acts and how many still quote that old saying to employees when told they cannot get something they want. They believe the customer is always right no matter what.

"Customers are not always right, but the customers are always the priority in every situation," Massenburge said. "A customer comes to your business desiring something. Whether that's directions, information, to purchase from your business, or to slander, the customer always comes first."

So maybe society shouldn't hold on to the belief of "the customer is always right." Instead, businesses should implement the customer should be a top priority and not just "right."

Photo by Connor Mason
Customer service is an important part of businesses. Employees are challenged to consider set policies while prioritizing customers.

Young, broke and in love

Four reasonably priced ideas for on-campus date night

By Marie Salazar
Editor-In-Chief

The temperature has lowered, and the holidays are around the corner. The season for dating is here and the tab for your date's bill is skyrocketing, leaving you with a full heart and an empty pocketbook.

Say you and your date decided to go to your local steak house and you both ordered an 8-oz steak and two sides. After taking the prices of the two most visited steak houses in Tyler and averaging the price of a full dinner from both, the price for a full restaurant dinner ranges from $35-$40. On average, with that data, a student could spend $160 every month if they went out at least once a week.

Comparatively, the medium independent college student's yearly income is around $13,880, according to collegeaffordability.urban.org. This means every month if working full time, a student is roughly making $1,156 before all bills and expenses.

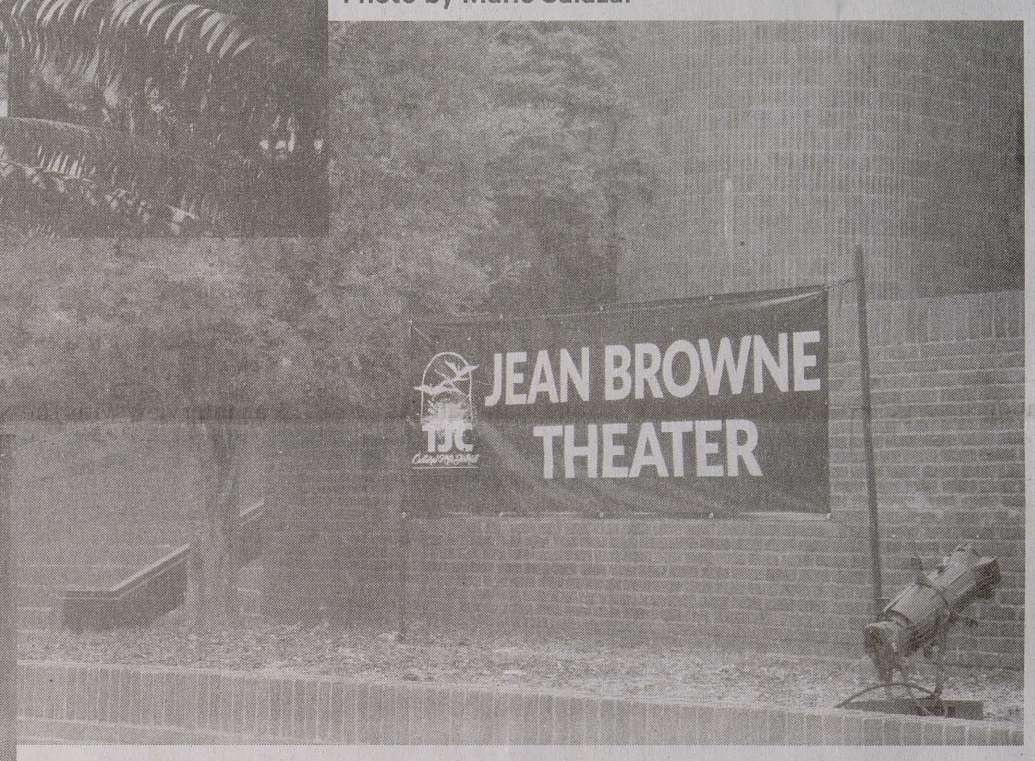
Going on dates could potentially become difficult for some, thus creating the need for more affordable date ideas. Below are a few affordable on-campus alternatives to take that special someone on a date.

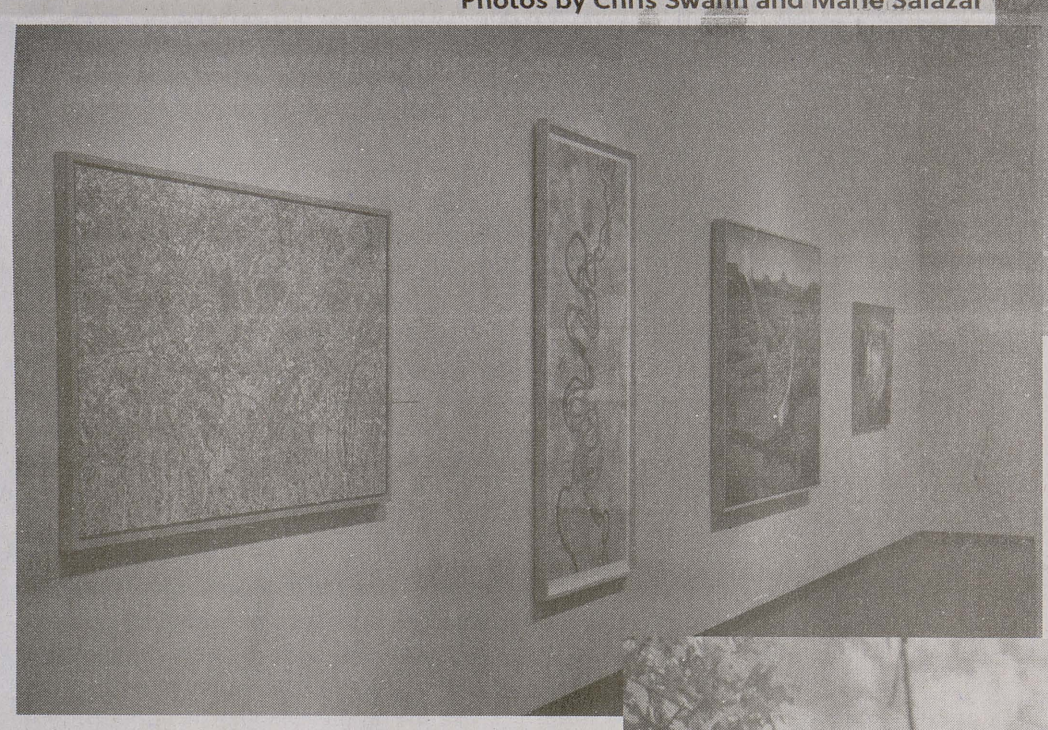
Above: The Vaughn Conservatory offers a lush venue for a picnic.
Below: Tyler Museum of Art remains quiet most days, perfect for an intimate date.
Photos by Chris Swann and Marie Salazar

Picnic at Vaughn Conservatory

The Bonna Bess Vaughn Conservatory, located directly adjacent from Rogers Student Center, provides a variety of date opportunities if you are a lover of plants, nature or anything green. When you enter the facility, you will often immediately divert your eyes to the albino catfish in the small aquarium located in the entrance. After standing a moment in awe, you'll find the doorway to the conservatory in the hallway between two classrooms. Inside the conservatory is a variation of seating options as well as tables available. The tables and chairs within the facility provide students the opportunity to grab lunch and have a picnic.

Below: The next show in Jean Browne Theatre will be "Nevermore" on Nov. 10.
Photo by Marie Salazar





Visit the Tyler Museum of Art

The Tyler Museum of Art has always been a hidden treasure not many students are aware of. According to pcscarts.org, "Art inspires us and can move us emotionally and intellectually in a time of uncertainty, anxiety and stagnation."

The Tyler Museum of Art provides individuals the opportunity to visit the facility and create a connection between the art and the person they're with.

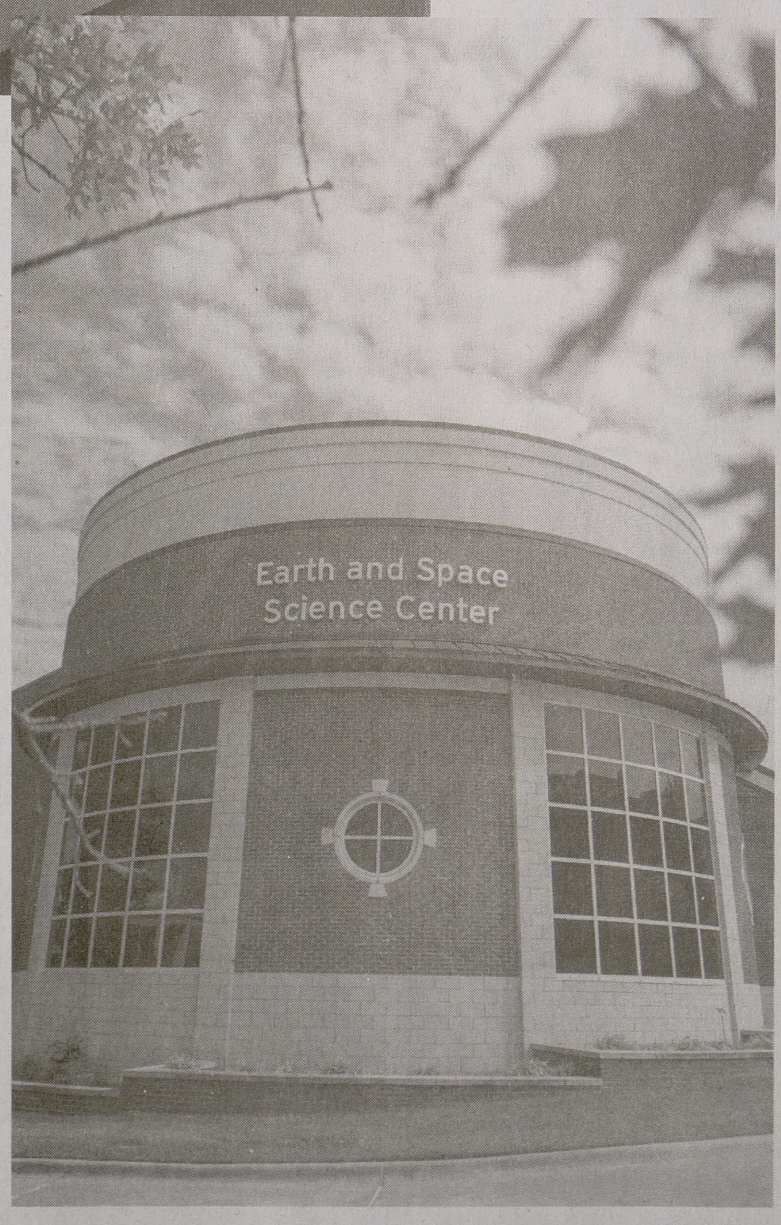
Executive Director Christopher M. Leahy explains the significance of viewing art in person.

"You experience looking at great art in its context, not on a computer screen, not in a book," Leahy said. "But the real thing, where you can take a look at it, and walk up to it and just marvel at how this jumble of paint and color creates a New York City rainy day winter scene."

The facility regularly interchanges its exhibits 12 times a year, with each exhibit remaining for two to three months.

The museum is open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday. It is free to TJC students with a valid TJC ID.

Right: TJC's Earth and Space Science Center hosts several shows and films for students.
Photo by Chris Swann



Watch a live performance

The variation of performance options on campus provides an opportunity for you and your date to delve into the fine arts at TJC.

Upcoming performance events for theatre include, "Nevermore: the Imaginary Life and Mysterious Death of Edgar Allan Poe." This performance will be held at 7:30 p.m., Nov. 10. The admission for students is free after providing a valid student ID. Approaching dance performances include "The Nutcracker." This performance will be held at 7 p.m. on Dec. 3, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Dec. 4 and 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Dec. 5 at Rogers Palmer Preforming Arts Center.

Kristi Franks, professor of dance and instructor for TJC's Dance Academy, discusses the experience a student can receive.

"'The Nutcracker' is such a special Christmas tradition, so if it's something they haven't seen before, it's really special for them to just kind of see what 'The Nutcracker' is," Franks said. "Also, I think they'll be impressed at the level of quality that we're able to provide in our Nutcracker."

Franks also mentioned students will receive a discount on ticket prices. Ticket prices for students will be announced closer to the performance date.

Catch a show at the Earth and Space Science Center

TJC's Earth and Space Science Center is the perfect place to make a connection with that special someone among the stars.

This facility provides a range of entertainment options for students to enjoy as an affordable date. Shows include "Unveiling the Invisible Universe," "Traveling with Light," "East Texas Sky – Live" and "Journey Through Space – Live." The center also offers an interactive experience called "Velocity." "Velocity helps children explore the science of motion and makes it fun to learn about basic physics concepts," according to sciencecenter.tjc.edu.

The Earth and Space Science Center is open to the public 9:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday. The entry cost for students is $1 with a valid student ID.

Review: 'Visions' forces much-needed fun back to 'Star Wars'

By Chris Crymes
Entertainment Editor

When attempting to make a formal opinion on "Star Wars," it's often hard to know where to start. Do you start with your personal gripes that have hung around since the series' return with "The Phantom Menace" in 1999? Do you present an all-around view of the franchise as a whole, attempting to skirt the divisive discourse engulfing the entire fan base? Do you leave it at the prequels versus sequels debate? When I find myself at this crossroads, I catch my mind going back to the sense of awe the original trilogy instilled in me when I watched them for the first time on VHS.

That's what hurt my feelings as I sat in theaters as a child when George Lucas' prequel trilogy invaded our cumulative childhood. With all the subtlety of Mike Tyson wearing concrete boxing gloves, Lucas stripped away the magical adventure of the original run and replaced it with the worst dialogue I've heard in theatrical releases, redundant explanations nobody asked for, horrendous CG effects, and shot composition as brain dead as his characters.

The "Star Wars" prequels are so poor in execution; Dave Filoni has made an entire career slapping Band-Aids over every plothole in the fictional universe in his "Clone Wars" and "Mandalorian" series. With the exception of season one of "The Mandalorian," these expanded universe stories suffice to make the prequels' worlds and characters make more sense in the grand scheme of things, but never feel excited to tell you these extended canon tales.

The sequel trilogy has a similar set of issues. The biggest has to be how the films never feel interconnected. Simply by watching the three movies back to back, it's painfully clear these are three scripts written after the previous film was knee-deep in its theatrical run. The most egregious example being how "The Rise of Skywalker" directly walks back on every bold decision writer/director Rian Johnson made in "The Last Jedi," making the trilogy as a whole feel as much like a company product as Filoni's projects.

It would seem Japan's big anime studios feel the same way, because "Star Wars: Visions" brings all the drive, excitement and creativity that has been absent from "Star Wars" since 1983. The best way to experience this miniseries is to go in as blind as possible. So, I'll do my best to keep my praises vague.

"Visions" is an anthology series of nine animated short films created by some of the most talented and visually captivating anime studios working today. All are entrenched in care, every frame beautifully crafted to push genuine star-faring adventure. The special thing about "Visions," though, is how each short captures the missing awe in their own way. "Promare" and "Kill la Kill" creators Studio Trigger capture what it means for something to be over-the-top in all the best ways with a giant and flexible lightsaber fight in space. Animators of the "Jojo's Bizarre Adventure" opening credit sequences and "Batman Ninja," Kamikaze Douga, finally integrate feudal Japanese aesthetics into the world of "Star Wars" in gorgeous black and white.

A surprise standout is "The Bride," from Kinema Citrus of "Made in Abyss" and "The Rising of the Shield Hero." This is a story that would be right at home with the "Prime Directive" stories: Where the conflict comes from the main characters being barred from interacting with a planet's inhabitants in order to keep that planet untouched from outside forces, forcing them to only observe a situation, no matter how dire.

All reviews are subjective, as any take on art is. That being said, "Star Wars: Visions" is truly what I've wanted from "Star Wars" since I was a kid. Each animation brought a childlike, ear-to-ear, grin to my face. If some new fantastical fun is something you've been pining after, check out "Visions" now on Disney+ and keep an eye in bookstores for upcoming expansion novels based on the shorts.

Image courtesy of Disney+

Review: Mike Flanagan baptizes audiences in 'Midnight Mass'

By Chris Crymes
Entertainment Editor

The term "hardest working person in Hollywood" gets thrown around frequently when talking about the modern surge of writer/directors, but Mike Flanagan has now cemented himself as the hardest working person in the horror genre with his latest Netflix miniseries, "Midnight Mass."

Flanagan has been on my radar since his short films about a man with delusions of a malevolent mirror. These intriguing, well-constructed shorts would become his first wide studio release in 2013: "Oculus." He proved he had the makings of a strong horror director with an original premise, fully written characters, creative shot compositions, and slow paced, well-crafted scares. While not the greatest horror film, "Oculus" offered a gasp of fresh air while in the center of the genre's "Paranormal Activity" chokehold.

In 2016, Flanagan began his fruitful partnership with Netflix with "Hush," this time proving he could create a heart-pounding thriller without a supernatural element. Utilizing a deaf, mute main character, Flanagan also showed off an understanding of utilizing audio to misdirect his audience into false senses of security before repeatedly pulling the rug out from under them. Next, Flanagan became my favorite horror director working today with two films leagues above what they deserve to be.

Closely following "Hush," came the surprise prequel to 2014's atrocious "Ouija" movie: "Ouija: Origin of Evil." Again, not the most groundbreaking movie in the demon possession subgenre, but the level of craft Flanagan stuffed in this prequel to one of the worst films in recent memory is astonishing. Specifically, the set and costume design nestle the viewer into the 1970s more than any other movie at its budget range. The same can be said with Flanagan's 2017 adaptation of Stephen King's "Gerald's Game," except this time he also shows off his writing chops and elevates a novella adaptation into a genuinely good small-scale thriller.

Next is the true defining point for Flanagan among horror filmmakers. After "Gerald's Game," Flanagan embraced his writer's side that was already present in his career with "The Haunting of Bly Manor," "Doctor Sleep" and "The Haunting of Bly Manor." Most pieces of horror media tend to lend themselves to a short story or novella. They give you just enough information to get you hooked, then let your imagination do the rest of the work. Characters aren't often the focus of horror media, but Flanagan's works go directly against this trend.

"Horror affords us the opportunity to really look at ourselves and the things that scare us, that disturb us, as a society and individuals. It's incredibly powerful." Flanagan said in an interview with The New York Times.

From "Bly Manor" forward, Flanagan abandons the 90-minute runtime of your average horror feature for sprawling tales of painfully authentic characters and relationships, set against a horror backdrop. If you're willing to spend the extended time with Flanagan, you won't only get some of the subtlest scares in modern film, but you'll also be confronted by weighty emotional haymakers that no other spooky media dare to try.

This brings us to "Midnight Mass." After over a decade of attempting to get the miniseries to the screen and dialing in the script, Flanagan offers his most personal and morally challenging piece yet, and it's one of the best things I've seen this year.

Following an ensemble cast on eerily secluded Crocket Island, "Midnight Mass" is both a starkly tragic collection of character studies and a scathing critique of those who would misuse religion for their own venue of condemnation and personal gain, specifically evangelical Christianity. For those who never felt quite at home in the Bible Belt, every beat of this show will hammer dead into their hearts. The message at first might seem solely vitriolic, but by the end, the message of "Midnight Mass" proves itself to be beautifully human and genuine. It's evident from every aspect of the miniseries that this is Mike Flanagan bearing something to the world that's been weighing on his soul.

The brilliant likening of ill-intent Christians and a certain supernatural entity is not the only glory of "Midnight Mass." The actors fully encapsulate small-town living in 2021, capturing both the generational and vocational gaps that time has brought to communities nationwide. A great example is how a leader of the local church never seems to want to share a word with the more modern-minded town doctor. When they are in the same room together, the church leader stabs with her words in ways that only someone with a small-town level of knowledge can hurt.

Every frame of "Midnight Mass" is a painting. From tight close-ups of characters sharing an intimate moment to engulfing wide shots, cinematographer Michael Fimognari proves he can shoot with the best when given the right director and material.

I can't stop thinking about Flanagan's writing. Flanagan's works capture the essence of the novel. He isn't afraid of long runtimes, even his latest film "Doctor Sleep" clocks in at over two and a half hours, but he never wastes the viewer's time. The man's works are also among the few modern examples of films and shows with genuine monologues. "Midnight Mass" pushes that further by reincorporating and combing characters' worldviews over the course of episodes within these monologues. If they were written by anyone else, I would've fallen asleep during every episode.

I could gush about "Midnight Mass" long enough to fill every page of this paper. But, in closing, this miniseries has some of the best writing, directing, acting, cinematography, and suspense in Flanagan's career. If you're interested in ushering in this Halloween season with something thoughtful, watch "Midnight Mass" on Netflix as soon as you get home.

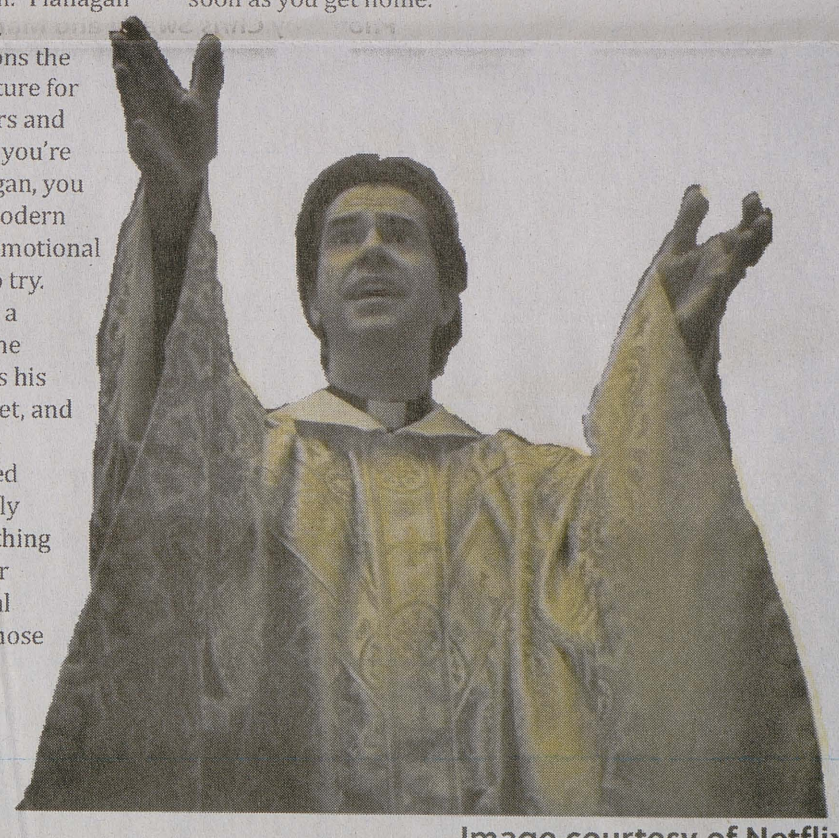


Image courtesy of Netflix

Mike Flanagan fought for over a decade to make "Midnight Mass," going as far as to sneak Easter eggs into his earlier projects like "Gerald's Game."
Image courtesy of Netflix

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Contact: Caroline Dougherty
cdou@tjc.edu

East Texas' hauntingly good times

By Nicki Tijerina
Multimedia Journalist

Corpse Grove, The Wicked Playground, is here with a half mile haunted trail pieced together with multiple scenes that are sure to make your heart race. Their website says, "Enough to terrorize even the toughest of the tough, so come play with the Lady in White."

The Lady in White's playground and the Twisted Malice in Wonderland were major thrills with both the guests and actors offering a unique and terrifying experience. Their Queen of Hearts said, "For wonderland we do special lighting and try to go all out and make this a terrifying experience."

People go to haunted houses for the thrill and they want to be scared while simultaneously being safe. Even people from other haunted houses across Texas found the Corpse Grove to be unnerving. A member of Cutting Edge, a Guinness world record haunted house, said "these guys are really good at scaring people. I've been working in haunted houses for two years and these guys are really building up a great experience."

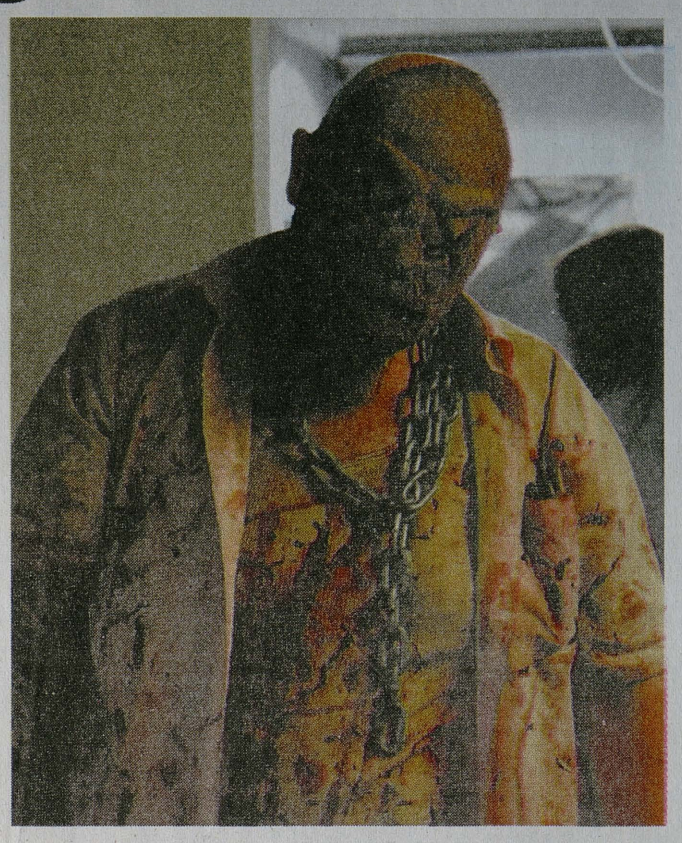
This haunted trail features two attractions in their half mile walk and their new haunted maze called Home of the Broken. They are open from 7:30p.m. to midnight Saturday and Sunday from 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Tickets are $15 for adults and $7.50 for children under 12. In addition to their general admission tickets, they also offer a VIP ticket that allows you to fast track through lines and attend an after hours ghost hunt with professional ghost hunters.

Another thrill that has opened is called The Word of Khaos. While their theme this year is a secret, they assure patrons the mystery is a part of the scare. Their website says, "although our haunted house theme for 2021 is being kept under wraps, we can promise you it'll be a great time—well, if you like being scared witless."

The actors love and dedication for scaring people and creating these chilling environments helps this be such a successful haunt. Patrick Hennessey, who has been working in this haunted house for 14 years said, "I love scaring people. It is part of who I am. When it comes to haunting, they will say this is part of who they are."

This time of year allows for these actors to tap into a different side of themselves, and once they put on their mask and make up they become another terrifying member of the World of Khaos. A clown named Hele said, "Once you put on make-up you just go with the flow."

World of Kahos also features two different haunts. General admission is $20, a VIP fast pass is $35, but TJC students can get $2 off their ticket if they show a current student ID at the ticket counter. They are open from 7p.m. to midnight Fridays and Saturdays and their blackout nights are open from 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. on Sundays.



Halloween offers a chance for workers at World of Khaos (above) and Corpse Grove (left) to show off their acting chops. Both locations are now open to East Texans for the spooky season. Photos by Asia Johnson and Joe Gaona

Coffee's risks & benefits

By Chris Crymes
Entertainment Editor

More so than books, paper, pencils, or other school necessities, one item is a daily must for students nationwide: Caffeine. According to a 2018 study from the Clinical Nutrition Journal, 92% of students take in some form of caffeine daily. The study also found students on average consumed 159 milligrams of caffeine per day, jumping to 173 mg per day when adjusted to regular caffeine users. The chief avenue for intake ended up being coffee. If you're on a college campus, odds are you either drank some coffee or have a caffeinated drink on hand as you're reading this, but is that energetic consumption having an adverse effect on you?

Since caffeine's rapid rise in consumption in the mid 90s, nutritionists and medical scientists have pursued an answer in regards to the pros and cons of caffeine consumption, but the results have been somewhat scattershot. Studies from the Mayo Health Clinic show a temporary rise in blood pressure when consuming coffee. Meaning if your family has a history of high blood pressure issues, maybe steer away from that fourth cup of Joe in the day.

Another key potential danger of coffee drinking is its effects on ones' rest. A 2013 study from the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine found consuming caffeine six hours or closer to bedtime will have "significant effects on sleep disturbance." The drawback of this study is the amount of caffeine used was 400 milligrams, or around four cups of coffee. So, keep that in mind when pouring late-night study session brews.

What about coffee's benefits? More recent studies involving coffee and caffeine are finding the benefits might be outweighing potential threats.

"The overall evidence has been pretty convincing that coffee has been more healthful than harmful in terms of health outcomes. For most people, moderate coffee consumption can be incorporated into a healthy diet," said Frank Hu, chair of the Department of Nutrition at Harvard's Chan School of Public Health.

According to Hu, that moderate consumption mark is around two to five cups of coffee per day. Hu also links this coffee intake to a lower likelihood of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, liver and endometrial cancers, Parkinson's disease, and depression. Hu warns going over the 400 mg mark puts you at the potential of dehydration and migraines, especially when not accompanied with enough water.

Chris French of Downtown Tyler's award-winning Café 1948 has a different take on the bean's benefits.

"Coffee for me is a lot of things; a source of income, a way to connect with people, a way to express myself, the list can go on. Coffee, beyond being a vessel for caffeine, has had a tremendous culture and various communities interpolating across many subcultures like cars, video games, photography and many more," French said. "To me, coffee is like a language. It serves as a cornerstone to which people of all walks are drawn to, and from those people you gain knowledge and tales of experience, and all from the heart of coffee."

But how much caffeine is in the various forms of coffee?

"Most 12 oz. cups of coffee hover around the 110 mg range, varying by region, roast, process, etc. Your average espresso has around 80 mg. which surprises a lot of people to hear a number below your simple cup of Joe, but you have to factor in volume; an espresso hovers around the 2-ounce mark, which makes the mg per volume much higher," French said. "Things like lattes and cappuccinos are made with espresso. So, caffeine content will be about the same. Cold brew is going vary wildly in my opinion, since cold brew is easily the least standardized item in the industry. Your average 16 oz. cold brew from Starbucks has somewhere around 200 mg, but most local shops use much less coffee per volume of water. At which, I would expect somewhere closer to 130mg-150mg per 16 oz."

As time goes on, the benefits and drawbacks to coffee and caffeine will continue to be studied. So, with all this in mind, the big takeaway for students is to actively monitor how much caffeine they're getting per day, particularly if among those crossing that 400 mg per day mark. If you've already a strong coffee once or twice today, go grab a big glass of water instead of that coffee or tea.

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